



## **CENTER FOR PARK MANAGEMENT**

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# **Best Practices in Friends Groups and National Parks**

Best Practices

# Key Findings of Success in the Relationship Management between Friends Groups and National Parks

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## Executive Summary

**A**s budgets have grown tighter in recent years, partnerships have become the way for parks to accomplish more with less. Most parks look towards their Friends for access to resources that would otherwise be unavailable. The use of “Friends” in this study, when unnamed, refers to the collective group of non-profit entities dedicated to the support of America’s national park units.

The greatest appeal of these Friends is their ability to fundraise. Several Friends conduct major capital campaigns for special projects and others create endowments for parks to use in perpetuity. However, Friends add more than economic value; they provide community legitimacy and access to key business and political leaders. Friends fundraise, friend-raise and advocate.

Given the reality of federal appropriations for parks, Friends are a vital part of the future of the Park Service. The National Park Service has given mandates to many parks to partner with the private sector and seek out Friends. Superintendents are now often judged by their ability to partner successfully. The process of fostering successful relationships still remains unclear to most, and many park units face difficulty in getting their Friends off the ground. As friends learn from each other, parks and Friends groups can learn from each other. This study highlights examples of past successes and suggests elements that might lead to future successful partnerships. This study was initiated by the Superintendent of Valley Forge National Historic Park as part of a larger analysis of their partnership landscape, but should be of use to all interested parks and Friends.

### Best practices

1. Parks and Friends must have a shared mission and similar goals for long term collaboration to work.
2. Mutual trust, necessary for the completion of large-scale projects, is earned over time.
3. Both partners must contribute equally to the relationship and be aware of park priorities and non-profit needs.
4. Clear and constant communication between parks and Friends, both in meetings and informal lunches, leads to understanding.
5. Both partners should commit to the relationship for the long term and work towards institutionalizing the partnership so that it is sustained beyond staff changes on both sides.
6. Create a culture of sharing and collaboration amongst park and Friends staff members to create staff “buy-in”.
7. Mutual respect between the park Superintendent and the Friends Executive Director facilitate success.

## Introduction and Project Scope

From the early years of the Park Service, private philanthropy has played an important part in the growth of the Park Service. Within the last twenty years, partnerships have become even more important with the reduction of Congressional support for park budgets. Partnerships with Friends help parks build public support, increase awareness, and encourage stewardship.

Outstanding successes with Friends exist throughout the Park Service. The major capital campaigns and endowments such as the Restoration of Golden Gate's Crissy Field and the Acadia Trails Forever program are the visible end results of these partnerships, but the process remains unclear. Currently, there is no tool box that exists for partnering with Friends. Rather, knowledge transfer is informal and limited learning takes place through word of mouth or specific requests of successful Friends and their parks. This study seeks to document some of what has been learned to date, and help to build the capacity of Friends partnerships.

### Project scope and methodology

The report originated as a request from Superintendent Mike Caldwell of Valley Forge National Historic Park as part of a greater a partnership analysis for the park and now is intended for use by all park units. Discussions with various Friends groups and members of the Park Service were conducted to determine the ingredients of success. Park staff illuminated areas where Friends provide programmatic help and explained the commitment and dedication needed for developing the relationships. Friends discussed the balancing of park needs with donor interests and expressed their frustrations with park bureaucracy.

Great consideration was given to ensure the diversity of the contributors. Park units from different geographic areas and of differing sizes were interviewed, including national recreation areas and national lakeshores. Park staff from the Superintendent down to the department chief level was consulted. The Pacific Regional Partnership Office and Deny Galvin, retired Deputy Director, provided a national perspective. Executive Directors, board members and staff of Friends were interviewed. Friends of various sizes and scale were included; from larger groups like the Friends of the National Parks at Gettysburg to smaller groups like the Friends of the Virgin Islands National Park. For a full list of interviewees, please refer to Appendix A: Contributors to Best Practices Study (p.12).

## Best Practices

**A**lthough creating a successful partnership is not an exact science, research revealed that several key elements are typically present in successful collaborations. Those key elements are detailed in this section, with current field examples of their application from parks and Friends groups.

### Key elements of successful partnerships

**1. Have the Same Mission and Goals:** Long-term planning is important, as the process of mapping out the mission and vision of both the park and Friends group ensures that the partners are working toward mutual goals and are aware of their respective roles.

Superintendent John Latschar of Gettysburg NMP is a proud member of the Friends group and actively participates in their meetings. When the Friends revised their mission statement, he participated in the board retreat and contributed to the long term vision.

**2. Trust is Earned over Time:** Rome was not built in a day, and with each successful project, the park staff and the Friends add to an atmosphere of mutual trust that allows for Friends groups to implement larger and more successful projects.

Jerry Eldelbrock of the Yosemite Fund noted during the planning and execution of the restoration of Lower Yosemite Falls, they were responsible for most of the work, with park oversight of course. This was only possible because the park could trust the Yosemite Fund to represent park interests, having worked with them on many smaller scale projects in the past.

**3. Both Partners Must Contribute to the Relationship:** As the senior partner, parks should promote their Friends at every opportunity. The park should also allocate resources to help build the capacity of their Friends. Friends need to help parks develop projects that meet park needs while having donor appeal.

Curt Buchholtz of Rocky Mountain Nature Association noted that donors like to see immediate results. He prefers land acquisition projects to capital construction because they can be done usually in less than 18 months versus years.

**4. Clear and Constant Communication Leads to Understanding:** Formal communications and agreements should clearly outline the roles and expectations of each partner. Regular “check in” meetings create an open atmosphere and keeps all parties are moving forward.

Christy Holloway of the Yosemite Association explained that regular meetings between the park and all the various partners not only encourage park-partner interaction, but also partner-partner support. The meetings facilitate sharing of project expertise between groups.

**5. Both Partners are in Relationship for Long Haul:** Efforts should be made towards institutionalizing the partnership so that it is sustained beyond staff changes on both sides. For example, top park management tends to be transitory, and efforts should be made to institutionalize the importance of Friends group as part of the park’s long-term strategy. Both partners should have long-term horizons.

Ken Olson, long time president of the Friends of Acadia, will be retiring from the position. But the transition between presidents should be smooth, like the recent transition of Acadia superintendents, because the partnership has been well institutionalized and is relatively free of personality-driven issues.

**6. Create Culture of Sharing and Collaboration:** The Superintendent must be able to share the control of the park with their Friends groups. This does not mean Friends should be involved in park management, but rather, they should offer a community perspective. Also, the Superintendent must create a culture of cooperation with Friends. Creating park staff “buy in” is often quite difficult and requires efforts of both the Friends and management.

Chesley Moroz of Eastern National said that their group is based on the concept of sharing, they operate bookstores for multiple park units and the profits are spread equally amongst all the parks and that they hire staff who embrace the sharing nature of the organization.

**7. Mutual Respect is Key:** The partnership boils down to mutual respect between two key individuals, the park Superintendent and the Friends’ Executive Director. The two of them must be able to work together and establish a culture of openness and communication for their staff and stakeholders. Even in situations where they disagree, they should retain the ability to work together out of mutual respect.

Golden Gate’s Superintendent Brian O’Neill and Executive Director Greg Moore of the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy act with the constant knowledge that the success of the park requires the cooperation between O’Neill and Moore and their staffs

Partnerships often function like personal relationships, whereby mutual respect and trust between the two parties are built over time through equal contribution and clear communication of roles and expectations. In the case of Friends partnerships, Superintendents need to share control, keep Friends’ needs in mind and be open to entrepreneurial ideas. Executive Directors of Friends groups need to understand that the park is the primary partner and the Friends can not always claim credit. They are translators between park and donor needs, and must balance the park’s need for control with their desire to expand their organization. Patience with bureaucracy is necessary in this environment. Specific recommendations for park Superintendents and Friends Executive Directors are detailed in Appendix B: Superintendents Set the Culture of Cooperation (p. 14) and Appendix C: Executive Directors Balance Multiple Priorities (p. 15).

## Friends are More Than Fundraisers

On the surface, Friends groups are attractive to parks because they can bring in private philanthropic dollars. However, parks should try to steer away from seeing Friends only as a development arm of a park as it limits the possibilities for growth and success. Rather, there are multiple functions of Friends in a park, namely: 1) Fundraising, 2) Friend-raising, and 3) Advocacy.

### 1. Fundraising

Although many Friends started out as special volunteer groups, the realities present in park funding makes fundraising necessary function of Friends. Certain Friends groups are able to undertake major capital campaigns for special projects in their park. The capital campaign for the Gettysburg National Battlefield Museum and the Cuyahoga Education Center are great examples of bringing in unique projects to parks. Highlights of the some other key capital campaigns are in Appendix D: Major Capital Campaigns. Such grand projects make Friends a highly sought after commodity, but it is important to though to remember, that the road to major capital campaign is long and arduous.

In order to undertake a capital campaign, most Friends usually need at least four or five years of growth to reach to a certain level of capacity. By then, according to Yosemite's Superintendent Mike Tollefson, the Friends group is able to attract certain board members who can bring other donors through their connections. A committed and active board, he notes, is vital to a high functioning Friends group. Fundraising is most effective when both the Friends and the park are active participants. At Rocky Mountain National Park, the Associates have an approved fund-raising campaign to support the development of park publications. Funds are made available to the cooperating association and the projects are jointly decided on by the Executive Director of the association and the Chief of Interpretation at the park.

According to Charles Taylor of the Santa Monica NRA, being cognizant of the length of time that it takes for a Friends group to develop as well as having the willingness to devote appropriate time and resources can lead to stronger Friends groups. Most Friends start out as volunteer organizations and can not fundraise until they have paid staff. At Big Bend National Park, Superintendent John King returned a \$30 thousand donation from their Friends and advised them to use those funds to hire an Executive Director to grow their capacity. In kind financial support and staff time investments from the park often allow Friends



groups the flexibility and support to design better support project through the addition of paid staff and better project development and design.

The major frustration for Friends unequivocally is the red tape and the bureaucratic restrictions. It is difficult for Friends to deal with the glacial speed at which the Park Service often moves at when it comes to project approval or handling donations. Currently, the National Park Service Director's approval is required for all projects over \$1 million and Congressional approval is needed for projects greater than \$5 million. Both the Friends and Park Service staff feel that Directors Order 21, the official guideline from the National Park Service which details the restrictions and policy as they pertain to fundraising in the park units, needs to be revised in the areas of project approval and donor recognition.

Friends are not only conduits for private funds for parks but also encourage philanthropy in parks. Friends often have their pulse on the philanthropic landscape of the great community. For example, at the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, they often conduct feasibility studies of projects amongst their donors so that they can ensure the success of their fundraising campaigns.

Donors may prefer to give to Friends rather than parks because Friends offer accountability and transparency that is not available in a large bureaucracy. Deny Galvin, retired Deputy Director of the Park Service noted that parks need to understand that donors give not in support of the Park Service but rather because of an affinity to the land or resource that is located within a park. In fact, most donors do not want to be "double taxed" nor do they want to offset Congressional appropriations with their donations. Friends ensure that the funds are used to create opportunities in education or outreach. When the Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association raises funds for the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center, the selling point for the program is the opportunity to educate and create future stewards of the environment (instead of pitching the project as direct support to the park).

## 2. Friend-raising

Friends groups not only bring money, but also "friends" to a park. Even though Golden Gate's Crissy Field restoration project raised \$34 million dollars, Golden Gate's Brian O'Neill does not extol the fundraising abilities of the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. Instead, he talks about the Conservancy's ability to friend-raise. Friends encourage the donors and the greater community to become stakeholders in the park, thereby, creating an opportunity to grow the park's support constituency.

Friends allow a park to reach out and build a group of supporters in the community. Often these groups end up serving as the park's community liaison and voice. Golden Gate wanted to attract Hispanic users who make up a large part of the population of the three counties where the park's lands are located so the conservancy consulted with them when planning began for Crissy Field. The community indicated to the Conservancy that weekend picnics were a common recreational activity for large family gatherings. According to the Conservancy's Carol Prince, the design of Crissy Field incorporated the suggestions of the Hispanic community by clustering the tables rather than using the single unit design. Now, Crissy Field is actively used by multiple community and ethnic groups, and the park is a vital part of the San Francisco experience.

Without the projects and efforts of Friends, many users have an impersonal and anonymous relationship with a park. Friends, through outreach, can offset tricky resource protection issues. The Santa Monica Mountains Fund made a strong effort to engage the involvement of a family that owned land around the park which the park eventually purchased. When the local landowners were protesting the purchase, the daughter of the family spoke out on behalf of the park and addressed the concerns of the opposition. Friends often send out newsletters or informational packets informing their members and the surrounding gateway communities of the park of the latest issues concerning the park. Friends often have annual reports to inform the community of the various projects and activities of the park to encourage future involvement.

### 3. Advocacy

With the ability of Friends to connect individuals to a park and create friends for parks; such engagement often leads to advocacy. Friends have unique access to key members of the community and the boards are often composed of the movers and shakers who can make things happen. According to Ron Tipton of the National Parks Conservation Association, “the beauty of a Friends group is that they are the perfect entry point to politicians at any level of government.” For example, a Friends of Gettysburg board member was instrumental in getting Senator Rick Santorum interested in Gettysburg National Military Park. Now the senator is one of the park’s most vocal supporters.

Advocacy for parks is a sensitively orchestrated matter between Friends groups and parks, because the nonprofits are private organizations and may hold views that differ from those of the Park Service. This area of possible tension can be offset by mutual trust and open dialogue. Friends of Acadia is a strong advocate on issues that relate to the Acadia area and works on preserving the agency-nonprofit relationship. The partners have a formal understanding that Friends' financial support to Acadia will never be jeopardized unless there are issues of non-performance on a project. Policy differences between the park and the Friends of Acadia do not interfere with Friends' grants to the park.

Most Friends do not advocate on park policies, but if they do, they try to make the relationship with the park their foremost priority. The Friends group most noted for its advocacy efforts is Friends of Acadia. Friends of Acadia differs from most other Friends groups in several ways: 1) it supports community projects in addition to Acadia National Park projects; 2) it makes grants to various community initiatives; 3) it actively advocates for policy changes that it believes are important; and 4) it is a "watchdog" to monitor issues and speak out as it deems appropriate even if its position differs from that of the NPS, and Friends is often called upon to testify before Congress or the state legislature.

Many Friends groups take on advocacy as part of their mission when they grow past the development stage. Joe Kessler of the Friends of Virgin Islands National Park said that as the group became more established and accomplished more projects with the park, they realized that their commitment is really to the natural and cultural resources of the park and not just as a park fundraising arm. He notes that the Friends never publicly confronts or berates the park, but rather engages the superintendent privately on issues or concerns that the Friends feels need to be addressed.

## Future of Partnerships

The future of partnerships is open for growth and Friends will certainly grow more important to the Park Service. The question remains as to why successful partnerships are not more rampant in the Park Service. One possibility relates back to funding in the parks. As good managers, park staff often tries to meet all park priorities with current levels of funding appropriated from Congress. However, when the park management seeks out private partnerships, it may appear that they are not able to meet all park priorities with federal funding and may get into political entanglements. A clear message of support from the Director's office endorsing partnership efforts could go a long way towards the growth of Friends.

One of the major concerns of most Friends is the upcoming sunset date of Directors Order 21, the official guideline from the National Park Service which details the restrictions and policy as they pertain to fundraising in the park units, on January of 2006. Various Friends and Park Service staff were consulted for their opinions and it is hoped by many that new legislation would allow for more flexibility at the park unit level. Although it is necessary for the parks to regulate donations so that America's national parks remain a refuge from advertising and the vulgarities of the outside world, there has to be a middle ground between protecting the junior rangers from being emblazon like NASCAR drivers and providing appropriate donor recognition.

The increase of private philanthropy in the park system also raises concerns that in light of vacillating federal appropriations, there may come a day when Congress may cut back on park budgets because of the success of private sector partnerships. That is currently an unlikely reality, however, as most Friends generally do not replace park funding for operational needs and rather try to add value to the visitor experience through unique projects, such as the Restoration of Lower Yosemite Falls, that expand and enhance the park's resources or mission. However, deteriorating federal funding and future maintenance of Friends funded projects is an issue of rising concern for the Friends and parks that were interviewed for this study.

## Appendices

### Appendix A. Contributors to Best Practice Study

#### National Park Service

State	Park	Name	Title
California	Golden Gate National Recreation Area	Brian O'Neill	Superintendent
California	Golden Gate National Recreation Area	Howard Levitt	Chief of Interpretation & Education
California	Golden Gate National Recreation Area	Rich Weideman	Chief of Public Affairs & Special Events
California	Santa Monica Mountains NRA	Woody Smeck	Superintendent
California	Santa Monica Mountains NRA	Charles Taylor	External Affairs Chief
California	Yosemite National Park	Michael Tollefson	Superintendent
Colorado	Rocky Mountain National Park	Larry Frederick	Chief of Interpretation
Maine	Acadia National Park	Len Bobinchock	Deputy Superintendent
Maine	Acadia National Park	Sheridan Steele	Superintendent
Ohio	Cuyahoga Valley National Park	John Debo	Superintendent
Pennsylvania	Gettysburg National Military Park	John Latschar	Superintendent
Texas	Big Bend NP/Rio Grande W&SR	John King	Superintendent
Virgin Islands	Virgin Islands National Park	Art Frederick	Superintendent
California	Pacific West Regional Office	Ray Murray	Partnership Program Chief
California	Pacific West Regional Office	Suzanne Brinkley	Partnership Program Planner
	National Park Service Washington Office	Deny Galvin	Retired Deputy Director

#### Friends Groups

<b>State</b>	<b>Friends Groups</b>	<b>Park Unit</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
California	Golden Gate NP Conservancy	Golden Gate NRA	Carol Prince	Deputy Director
California	Golden Gate NP Conservancy	Golden Gate NRA	Charlene Harvey	Board Chair
California	Santa Monica Mountains Fund	Santa Monica Mtn NRA	Art Eck	Executive Director
California	Yosemite Association	Yosemite National Park	Christy Holloway	Board Chair
California	Yosemite Fund	Yosemite National Park	Jerry Edelbrock	Vice President
Colorado	Rocky Mtn Nature Association	Rocky Mtn NP	Curt Buchholtz	Executive Director
Maine	Friends of Acadia	Acadia National Park	Ken Olson	President
New York	Statue of Liberty-Ellis Isl Foundation	Statue of Liberty NM	Stephan Briganti	Executive Director
Ohio	Cuyahoga Valley NP Association	Cuyahoga Valley NP	Deb Yandala	Executive Director
Pennsylvania	Eastern National	Parks in 30 States	Chesley Moroz	President
Pennsylvania	Friends of NP at Gettysburg	Gettysburg NMP	Barbara Finfrock	Board Chair
Pennsylvania	Friends of NP at Gettysburg	Gettysburg NMP	David Booz	Executive Director
Pennsylvania	Friends of NP at Gettysburg	Gettysburg NMP	Dru Neil	Communications Director
Pennsylvania	Gettysburg NB Museum Foundation	Gettysburg NMP	Elliot Gruber	Vice President
Virgin Islands	Friends of the Virgin Islands NP	Virgin Islands NP	Joe Kessler	Executive Director

#### **National Parks Conservation Association Staff**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Department</b>
Phil Voorhees	Vice President	Center for Park Management
Scott Edwards	Director	Center for Park Management
Karen Miner	Consultant for Forest Service Partnership	Center for Park Management
Ron Tipton	Senior Vice President, Programs	Executive
Laura Loomis	Director, Visitor Experience	Government Affairs

## Appendix B: Superintendents Set the Culture of Cooperation

**Superintendents bear the brunt of the responsibility for a successful partnership with Friends.** Superintendents need to be flexible and entrepreneurial individuals who are open to giving up control. The park Superintendent is not unlike the mayor of a town and needs many skills. The park staff and Friends interviewed all noted that as part of the training and development process for Superintendents, skills for developing partnerships should be taught. Ray Murray of the NPS Pacific Region Partnership Office mentioned that not only should the Superintendent not set the state of cooperation between the park staff and Friends, but also amongst multiple Friends. When John King started his Superintendent assignment at Big Bend National Park, there was a spirit of competition rather than cooperation among the partner organizations. He established the "partnership council" to marshal collective resources, discuss ways to collaborate and work interdependently and share information about ongoing and future activities of each partner. That dialogue and the activities of the council have created a genuine sense of cooperation and mutual respect amongst the Big Bend partners.

**Superintendents need to honor agreements with Friends.** Failed promises to Friends and donors lead to mistrust. Laura Loomis of the National Parks Conservation Association recalls a problem that arose between Channel Islands National Park and their Friends when the Friends over how fundraised money was spent. The Friends had designated the funds for interpretive programs but the park spent it on repairs instead; which lead to a breakdown in cooperation between the park and the group. In addition, many donors often request matching funds of the Park Service when they make major gifts. As legislated fund matching is often difficult for Superintendents to manage and secure due to the changing national funding landscape; many instead use fee demo funds which are at the parks disposal.

**A Superintendent needs to be able to navigate on behalf of the Friends through Park Service agency guidelines.** The bureaucracy of the Park Service is put in place as a safeguard to prevent inappropriate fundraising. However, legislation and directives from the Park Service may limit the growth opportunities of the Friends. When the Park Service was splitting development arms of growing Friends groups several decades ago, Golden Gate's Brian O'Neill advocated on behalf of the growing Conservancy and worked with the Conservancy to help the regional office understand the need to keep the group whole. The Superintendent taking on the proactive role of educator and translator is often necessary in a bureaucratic environment to help the Friends deal with the park service legislations.

**Superintendents need to be sensitive to non-profit needs and be considerate to the concept of time.** The slow response time of the Park Service can be frustrating for groups. For example, the Park Service often is not ready to immediately takeover the land that the Friends of the National Parks at Gettysburg acquire on the park's behalf. But the non-profit tax status of the Friends does not allow them to hold on to large assets such as land for long. Subsequently, Gettysburg NMP engaged the real estate department of the Park Service to rectify the issue as soon as possible. In addition to being sensitive to time needs, Friends need parks to give them concrete projects with broad community appeal to support, especially at the beginning of a partnership. Doing so increases the probability of the project's success while creating valuable momentum for the park and the partner. Earned income opportunities can help Friends obtain seed money for projects. A good example of this is the Yosemite Fund license plate, which is a steady revenue base for projects and requires little work. Golden Gate is a leader in building a fundraising base that goes beyond major gifts by offering visitor services on Alcatraz and by commissioning and marketing the highly popular Golden Gate National Parks images that help the public understand the many diverse sites that are park of this park.

## Appendix C: Executive Directors Balance Multiple Priorities

**The Executive Director of a Friends group has to be willing to forgo credit.** The public is often not aware of the great amount of work that Friends invest in a project. The visitors who visit Lower Yosemite Falls usually credit the park for providing them with that experience and not the Yosemite Fund unless they look carefully. Deb Yandala of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association notes that she positions herself and her organization to be in the shadow of John Debo, the park Superintendent, at press and public events. She is aware that the existence of the Friends is tied to the success of the park and encourages her staff to celebrate the park. Many Friends clearly communicate to their staff the importance of supporting the park at every turn. At the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, an integral piece of their mission is support of the park; employees know that publicly critiquing the park goes against mission and is grounds for dismissal.

**Executive Directors should encourage involvement of board and members by strengthening their affinity.** Executive Directors are often responsible for fundraising and project development. However, it is also important for them to reach out to the community. The more members the Friends have, the more legitimacy and community clout they possess. Members and the board of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park Associates are the “movers and the shakers” of the Northeast region of Ohio. They often speak up on behalf of the park in letters to the editor and advocate for parks. Friends can build the affinity of their members for the park by offering tokens for their involvement. Board chair Barbara Finfrock noted that the first project to rally the support of Friends of the National Parks at Gettysburg was the removal of power lines from the park. To build affinity, volunteers who fundraised or participated in the project were given power line pieces as a reminder of their link to the park.

**Executive Directors also constantly balance organizational needs and park requests.** Often the Friends have the pulse of the greater foundation and donor community and try to help the parks by initiating projects. This may lead to issues however when the park does not have resources to support the initiatives of the Friends. Superintendent Sheridan Steele of Acadia recalled that at previous parks he has worked at, the Friends group would fundraise for capital building projects that the park was unable to support, leading to an atmosphere of tension. Friends should instead work with parks in developing projects that address park needs. In areas such as operational support, which are not as easy to fundraise for, or functional needs such as interpretive program support, which are reoccurring, Friends may consider establishing smaller revolving funds for the park to use to address those needs. At the Rocky Mountain National Park, the Rocky Mountain Nature Association has a fund dedicated to the development of new interpretive publications for the park. Proceeds from the publications are returned to the park, where they assist in the funding of important educational and interpretive programs.

**An Executive Director should be aware that growth of Friends changes their relationship with the Park.** Friends groups in their early stages are heavily dependent on park support, and the Executive Director looks to for staffing support from the park parks for resources and support of start-up requirements and activities. The Santa Monica Mountains Fund co-located their administrative office at park headquarters to support start-up requirements and closer communications. As they get more robust, Friends groups may start to become more invested and may venture into advocacy. This can make parks nervous since the Park Service likes to maintain control. Ken Olson stated that Friends of Acadia does not have an overarching memorandum of understanding with the park and works instead from a series of project-specific agreements. This ensures Friends' independence in policy and advocacy, which are vital parts of its mission. Friends of Acadia supports Acadia NP in a multitude of functions (recently adding land acquisitions) but is also a strong advocate for the geographic region.

## Appendix D: Major Capital Projects

### **Acadia Trails Forever**

The Acadia Trails Forever project is a joint effort of the Friends of Acadia and Acadia National Park that rehabilitated the trails of the park as well as endowed maintenance of the trail system in perpetuity. Acadia is now the first park in history to have privately endowed trails. The program launched in 1999 with a \$13-million campaign. The park committed \$4 million from the fee demonstration program and the Friends raised \$9 million in private donations. The campaign finished in 2000, two years ahead of schedule. The privately raised \$9 million created three endowments that went towards trail maintenance, the Acadia Youth Conservation Corps, and the establishment of the Ridge Runner program. The Ridge Runners assist resource management staff in constructing cairns, monitoring trail and carriage road use, and advising hikers about "leave no trace" principles.

### **Cuyahoga Education Center**

The education center is a 128-bed residential Environmental Education Center (EEC) located at Cuyahoga National Park that opened in 1994. The curriculum taught at the center integrates science, arts, environmental issues, and history. The concept was introduced in the 1977 General Management Plan, but did not take off until the arrival of Superintendent John Debo in 1988. The Superintendent believed that an operating partner was essential in making the project self-sustaining, and would facilitate operations that were impossible for the federal government. Superintendent Debo approached the park's Friends group, Cuyahoga Valley Association (CVA), and asked them to take on the partnership role. In 1993, CVA accepted the challenge to operate the EEC. Even with the partner taking the lead in decision-making and operations, the NPS continued its strong presence at EEC in terms of funding, staff, and program direction. Ultimately, the committee running the EEC became independent from CVA and spun off as the separate Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center (CVEEC) in 2000. This decision also resolved some tensions that naturally arose as the EEC essentially outgrew its small parent organization. The split allowed CVEEC to develop an aggressive development program. The education partnership at CVNP went through reinvention again in 2002, triggered by the park's need for a high performance Friends group. As a result, the CVA was absorbed by CVEEC, and they are now known as the Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association (CVNPA).

### **Gettysburg National Battlefield Museum and Visitor Center**

The Gettysburg National Battlefield Museum Foundation entered into a General Agreement with the National Park Service in 2000 to raise funds for a museum complex for Gettysburg National Military Park. The complex encompasses a visitor center, museum, Cyclorama gallery, and classrooms for school and educational programs. The Foundation will operate on behalf of the NPS for 20 years, after which time the land and building would be donated to the NPS. The project broke ground in 2004 and is estimated to be occupied in 2006. The original estimation for capital was \$39.3 million, but was raised to \$68.3 million with the completion of the schematic design. Funds for the project will come from private donations from corporate, foundation, and individual donations and/or grants, as well as debt financing. Operational funding from interpretive fees, user fees, sales revenues and rentals will provide the revenue to fund program costs and allow



for ongoing programmatic upgrades. The concept began after Superintendent John Latschar arrived in 1994. After long negotiations with NPS, and a lengthy RFP process, the Gettysburg National Battlefield Museum Foundation was founded to develop the museum in 1998. By 2001, the conceptual design was completed and released to the public. The Fundraising Agreement between the NPS and the Museum Foundation was modified to ensure that construction would not start until the Museum Foundation had secured sufficient funds to present the NPS with a completed product, including building, exhibits, and Cyclorama painting restoration.

### **Restoration of Golden Gate's Crissy Field**

Crissy Field was a former military post and was restored to its former ecological richness through a \$34.5 million campaign by the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and Golden Gate NRA. The project created a tidal marsh, open space meadow, a promenade and the Crissy Field Center. Instrumental in the process was the support of the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund, a longtime champion of the park. The planning process took almost ten years and in 1999, the site was ready for volunteers to begin restoration efforts. A "Help Grow Crissy Field Campaign" recruited over 3,000 volunteers from schools, community-based groups and individuals, and the bulk of the work was completed in 2000.

Maintaining momentum and achieving goals in the midst of complex partnerships proved to be a challenge throughout the public campaign. Key partners included the Conservancy, the National Park Service, the Presidio Trust, the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, local neighborhood organizations, user advocacy groups, and the GGNRA Advisory Commission. They all played significant roles during the years of planning, fundraising and marketing leading to the opening of Crissy Field. These organizations often had differing objectives and strategies, and hence divergent concerns in a number of areas.

### **Restoration of Lower Yosemite Falls**

The Yosemite Fund raised \$12.5 million in private and public funds to improve the visitor experience at Lower Yosemite Falls in Yosemite National Park. Private donations accounted for \$10.5 million and fee demonstration funds added \$1.5 million along with \$500 thousand from the National Park Service. Private donations came mainly from Yosemite specialty license plate funds, and a number of corporations and foundations, and over 14,500 friends of Yosemite. Efforts were made to include donor involvement beyond financial help, for example, ChevronTexaco, a corporate donor, had their employees helping with the project on weekends. The Yosemite Fund, in partnership with the National Park Service and landscape architect Larry Halprin, created a new design for the 52-acre area at the base of Yosemite Falls. The project accommodates, educates and inspires visitors while restoring and preserving the natural integrity of the adjacent forest and stream habitat. Automobile and tour bus parking in the area have been eliminated and shuttle bus and pedestrian access enhanced. The Yosemite Fund created donor recognition at various levels and contributors over \$5 thousand were identified on a panel at the visitor center. Interpretive waysides also carry credit lines. The Yosemite Falls restoration project is the largest private/public project of the park and is part of the 1997 flood restoration outlined in the Yosemite Valley Plan.

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More case studies available at National Park Service Partnerships Case Study website: [http://www.nps.gov/partnerships/case\\_studies.htm](http://www.nps.gov/partnerships/case_studies.htm)

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# Friends Group Best Practices Report

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## **CENTER FOR PARK MANAGEMENT**

The Center for Park Management works with the National Park Service to improve the management capacity and organizational effectiveness of the stewards of our national parks.

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